



ISSUE #2  
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# THE TRANSFORMERS SPOTLIGHT



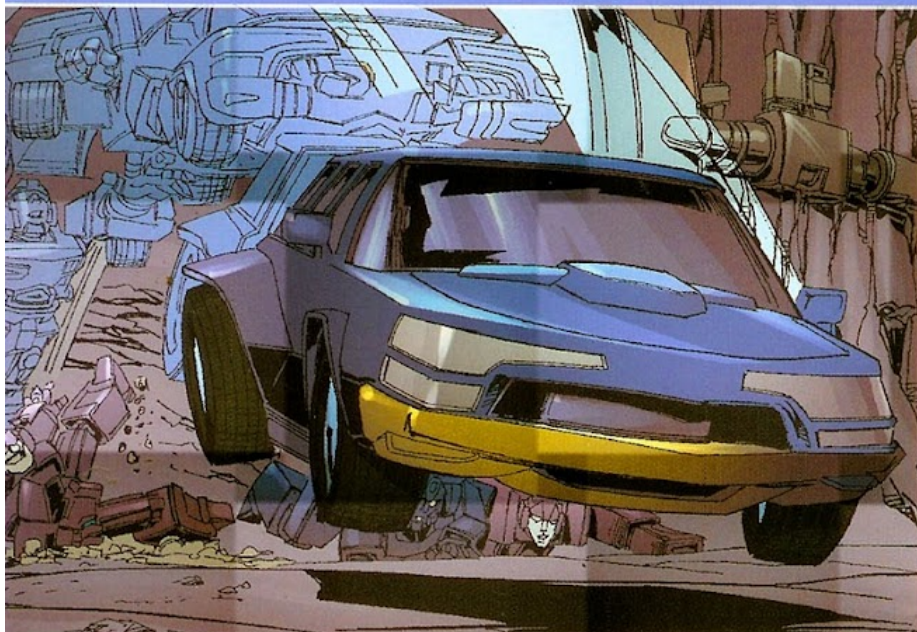
## NIGHTBEAT



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Cover by MD Bright





## THE TRANSFORMERS: SPOTLIGHT #2

# NIGHTBEAT

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A lone wolf, ceaselessly questing, searching for answers to problems big and small, his irregular and unconventional logic, combined with a keen, probing intellect, makes him perfect for the toughest, most convoluted investigations. He loves nothing more than a mystery, the bigger the better, and he never, ever gives up once he has the scent. His name...

...IS NIGHTBEAT.



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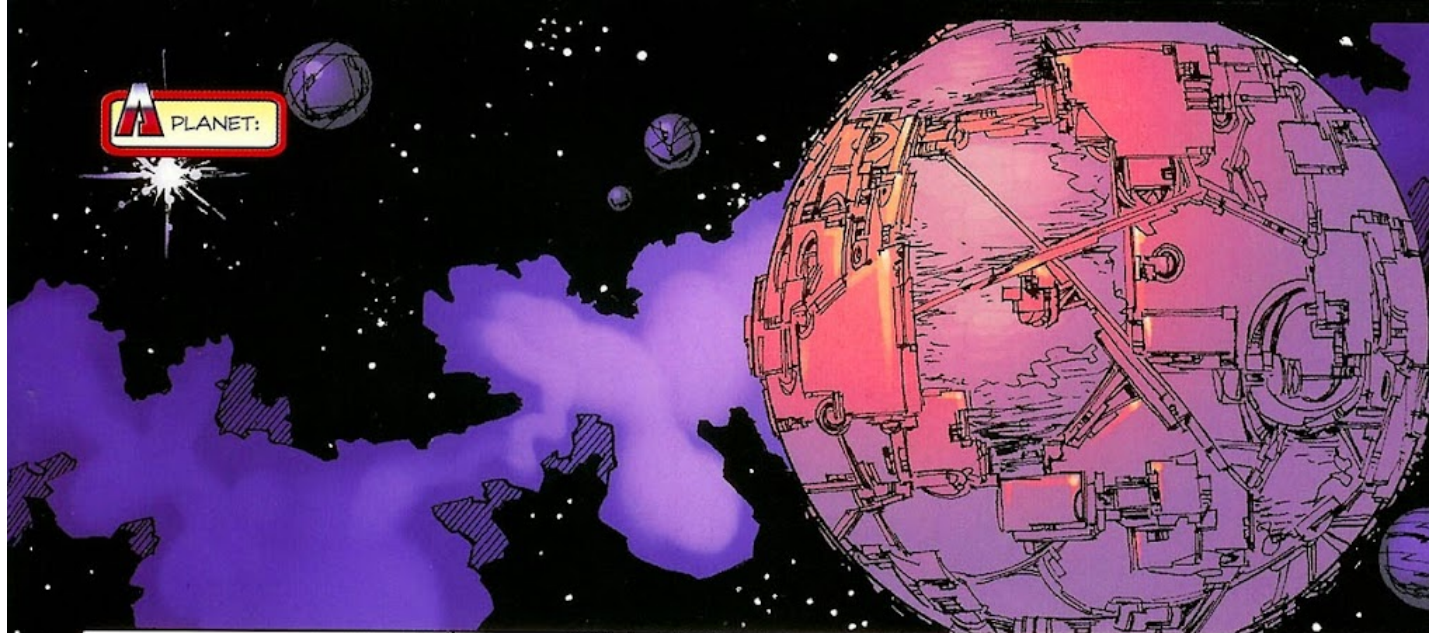
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**A** PLANET:



**A TANTALIZING  
OFFER:**



...I'M HOLDING IS A PART  
OF THE FLIGHT RECORDER  
FROM THE FIRST ARK. I  
UNCOVERED IT *HERE*, ON  
*GORLAM PRIME*.

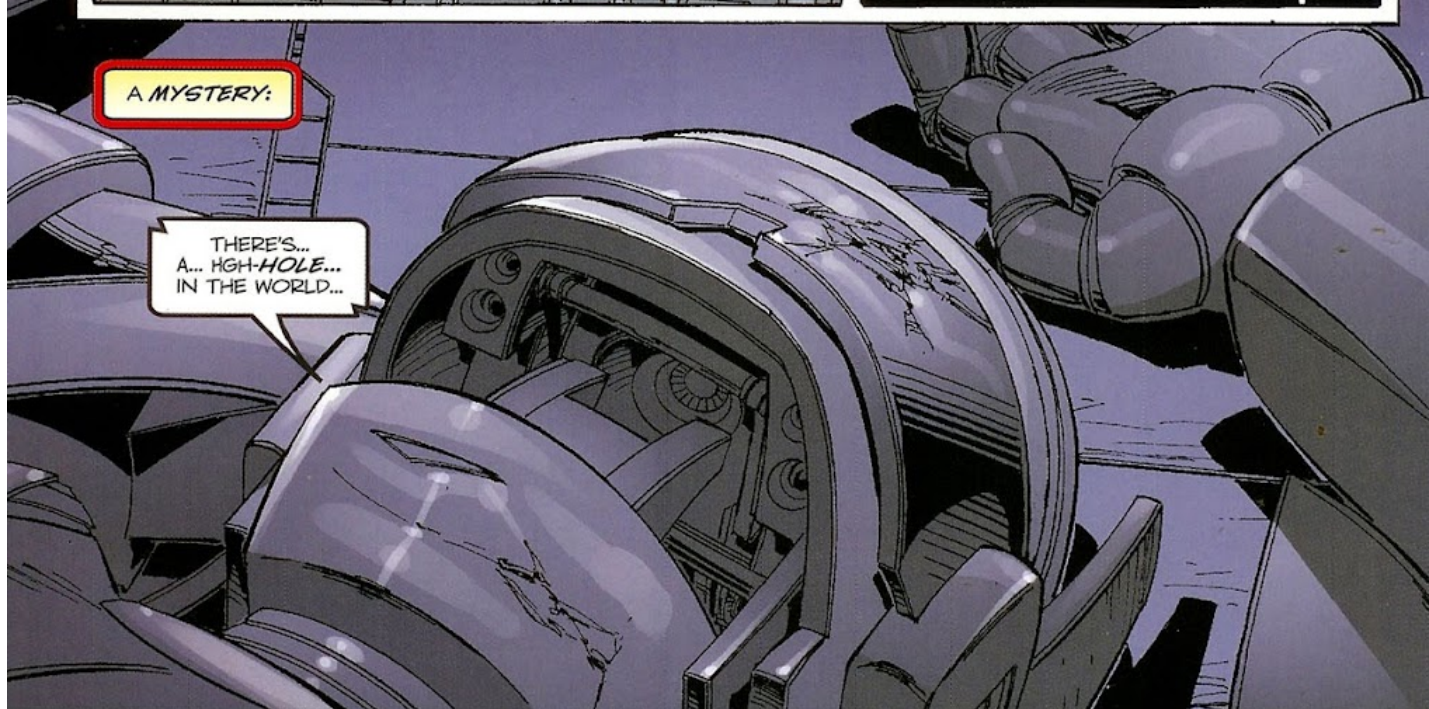
IT'S *YOURS*...  
FOR A PRICE!

**A RENDEZVOUS:**




...READING *ONE*  
LIFE SIGN, VERY  
FAINT...

**A MYSTERY:**



THERE'S...  
A... *HGH-HOLE*...  
IN THE WORLD...





THE NAME'S  
*NIGHTBEAT.*  
SOLVING MYSTERIES  
IS WHAT I DO.

I START WITH  
THE BASICS...

WHO?  
WHAT? WHY?

KRAKON:


NATIVE OF THE PLANET  
HYPERION—MERCENARY,  
ADVENTURER, EXPLORER... A  
*TRADER* IN EVERYTHING  
FROM OUTLAWED WEAPONRY  
TO "UNUSUAL" ARTIFACTS.

CAUSE OF  
DEATH...






...UNKNOWN.  
UNNATURAL  
CERTAINLY.



IT'S LIKE THE LIFE  
WAS JUST SUCKED  
RIGHT *OUT* OF HIM.

SIGNS OF ACCELERATED  
*NECROSIS*, BUT SCANS  
READ NEGATIVE FOR  
TOXINS, CORROSIVE  
SUBSTANCES OR NERVE  
AGENTS.

MOTIVE:



THEFT? REVENGE?  
SANCTION? FOR A "MECH"  
IN KRAKON'S LINE OF  
WORK, THE POSSIBILITIES  
ARE ENDLESS. I IMAGINE HE  
UPSET A *LOT* OF PEOPLE.

BUT IF IT  
WAS THEFT...

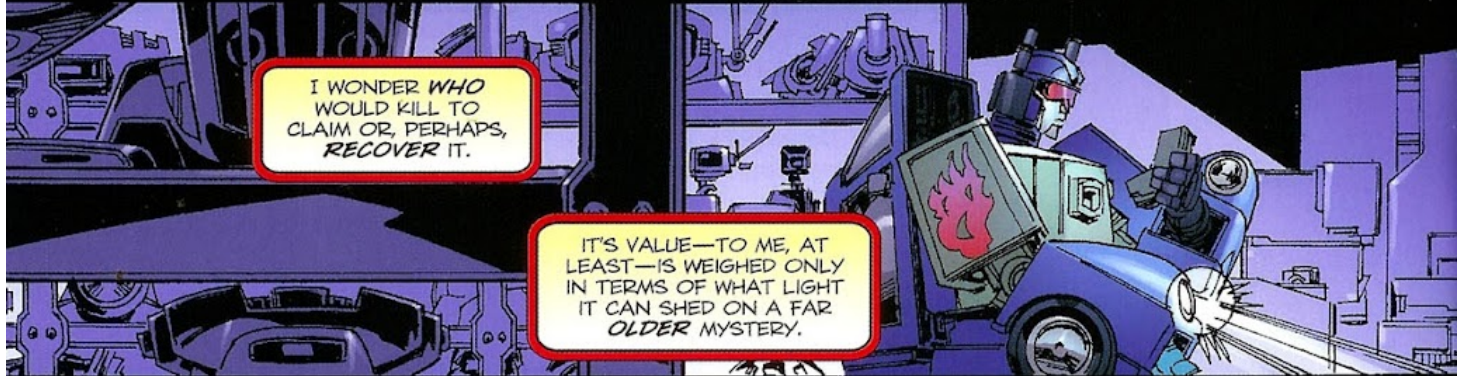


...IT WAS A VERY  
*SPECIFIC* THEFT.

THERE'S A *LOT* OF VALUABLE  
STUFF HERE, UNTOUCHED. BUT  
AMONGST THE J'ORGAN  
LANCES AND STARFIRE FUEL  
CANISTERS AND CHIMERA  
ORBS, I FIND *NO TRACE*...


...OF THE FLIGHT  
RECORDER KRAKON  
OFFERED ME.





I WONDER *WHO* WOULD KILL TO CLAIM OR, PERHAPS, RECOVER IT.

IT'S VALUE—TO ME, AT LEAST—IS WEIGHED ONLY IN TERMS OF WHAT LIGHT IT CAN SHED ON A FAR *OLDER* MYSTERY.




SIX-POINT-TWO MILLION META-CYCLES AGO THE FIRST STAR-GOING VESSEL TO BEAR THE NAME *ARK* WAS LAUNCHED. ITS MISSION—TO PLOT SAFE PASSAGE BETWEEN THE CYBERTRONIAN QUADRANT AND THE BENZULI EXPANSE.



TWENTY THOUSAND ASTRO-CYCLES OUT...



...IT *DISAPPEARED*. ALL HANDS LOST.



SINCE THAT TIME, HARD FACTS HAVE BECOME *LEGENDS*, THE SCANT RECORDED DATA TURNED—BY WORD OF MOUTH—INTO *APOCRYPHA*. SOME BELIEVE IT'S THE ONE MYSTERY THAT SHOULD BE LEFT *UNSOLVED*.



I *DON'T*.



"UNCOVERED." THAT  
WAS HOW KRAKON PUT  
IT. "UNCOVERED... ON  
GORLAM PRIME."

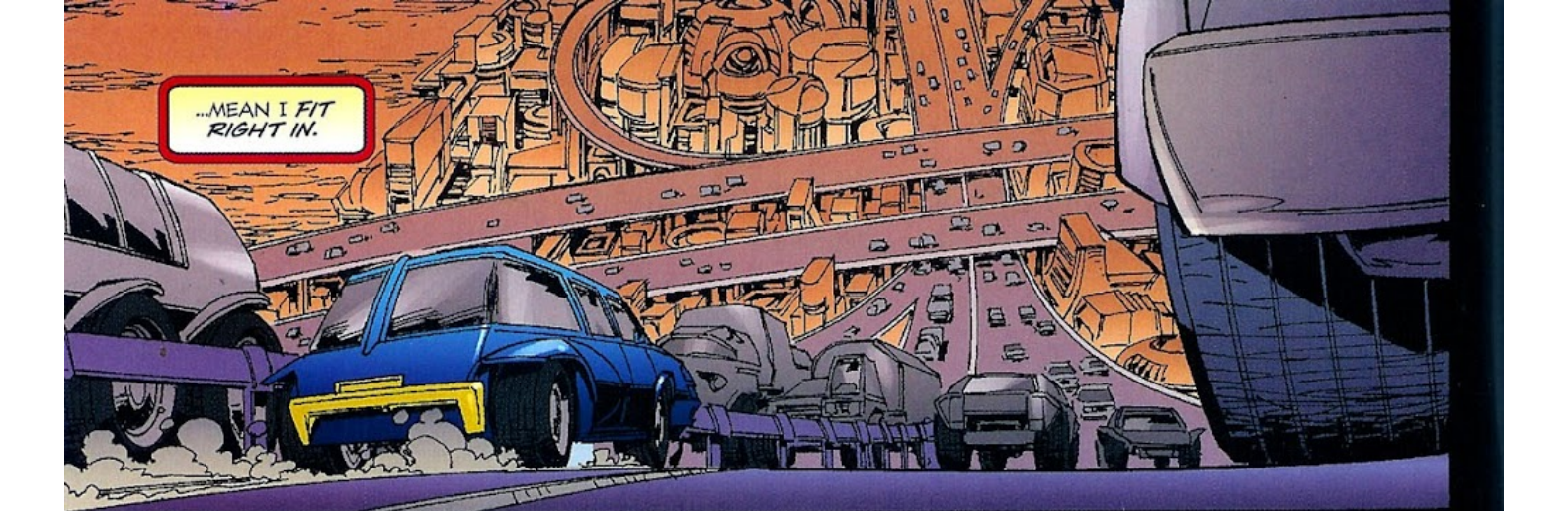
ORBITAL JUMP.  
NOT THE NICEST  
WAY TO TRAVEL...

...BUT IT GETS YOU  
DOWN *FAST*, SLIPS  
YOU PAST ANY KIND  
OF LOCAL SENSOR  
NETWORK.

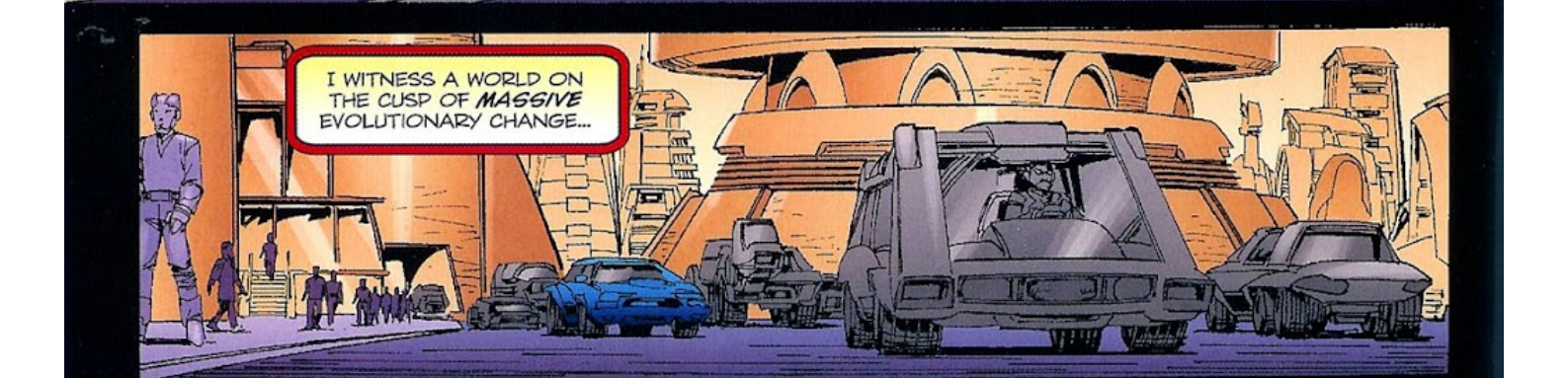
TECHNOLOGICALLY ADVANCED AS  
THEY ARE, THE LOCAL INHABITANTS  
ARE *UNUSED* TO OFFWORLDERS.

AND THE *REFINEMENTS*  
I HAD MADE TO MY  
EXOSTRUCTURE...





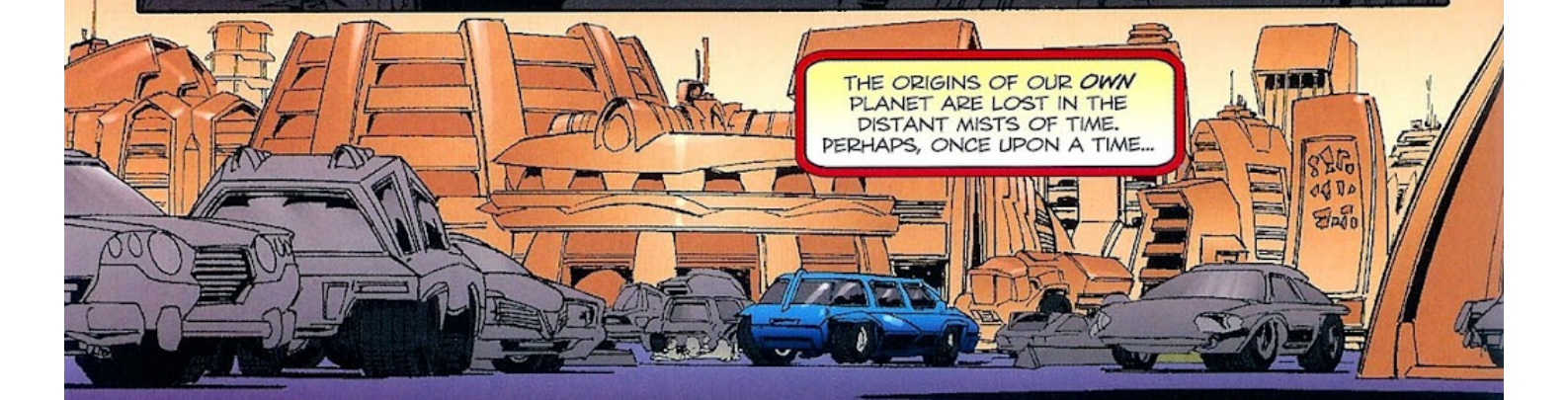
...MEAN I FIT  
RIGHT IN.



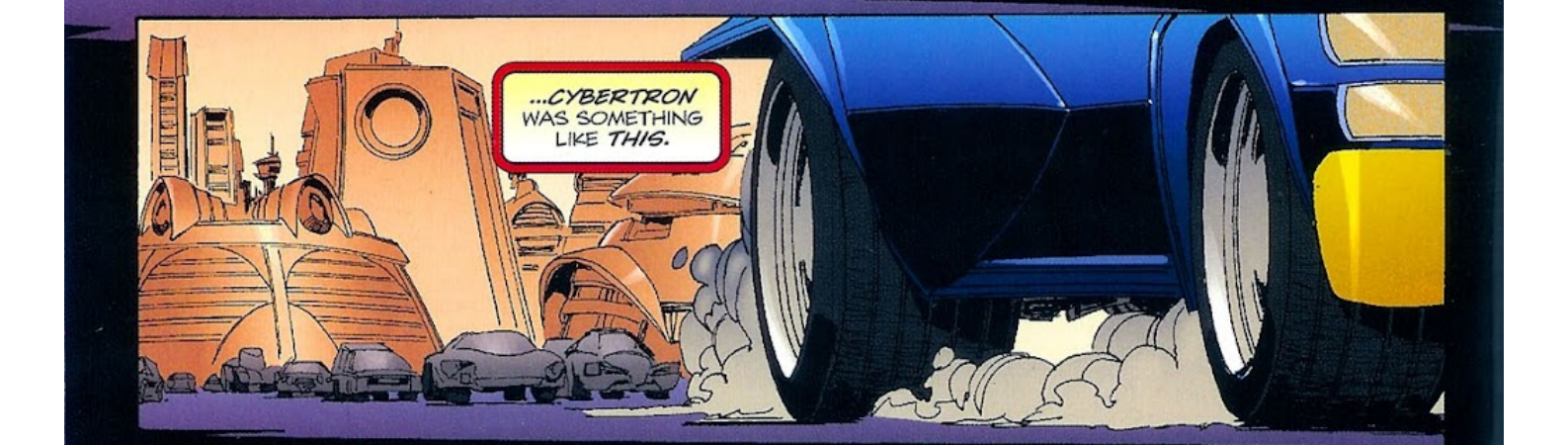
I WITNESS A WORLD ON  
THE CUSP OF *MASSIVE*  
EVOLUTIONARY CHANGE...



THE INHABITANTS CLEARLY  
UPGRADING FROM ORGANIC TO  
BIOMECHANICAL, AND I *WONDER*.



THE ORIGINS OF OUR *OWN*  
PLANET ARE LOST IN THE  
DISTANT MISTS OF TIME.  
PERHAPS, ONCE UPON A TIME...



...CYBERTRON  
WAS SOMETHING  
LIKE *THIS*.






THE LOGS ON  
KRAKON'S SHIP  
REFERENCE A NUMBER  
OF EXCAVATIONS.

THE FIRST THREE  
YIELD NOTHING OF  
GREAT IMPORT,  
OTHER THAN...

...AN INCONGRUITY.



THE INDIGENT SOCIETY ON  
GORLAM ONLY REACHED  
FULL INDUSTRIAL  
MATURITY SEVEN HUNDRED  
STELLAR CYCLES AGO.  
AND YET...

...THE GEOLOGICAL STRATA  
REVEALED BY KRAKON'S  
DIGGERS PROVE THAT  
GORLAM ITSELF BEGAN ITS  
TECHNOLOGICAL  
EVOLUTION FAR EARLIER  
ALL OF WHICH...

...SUGGESTS  
OUTSIDE/OFFWORLD  
MANIPULATION.



AN ENIGMA...



...WRAPPED IN  
A MYSTERY.



EXCAVATION  
SITE NUMBER 4...

...YIELDS INTRIGUES  
MORE *GERMANE* TO  
MY INVESTIGATION.

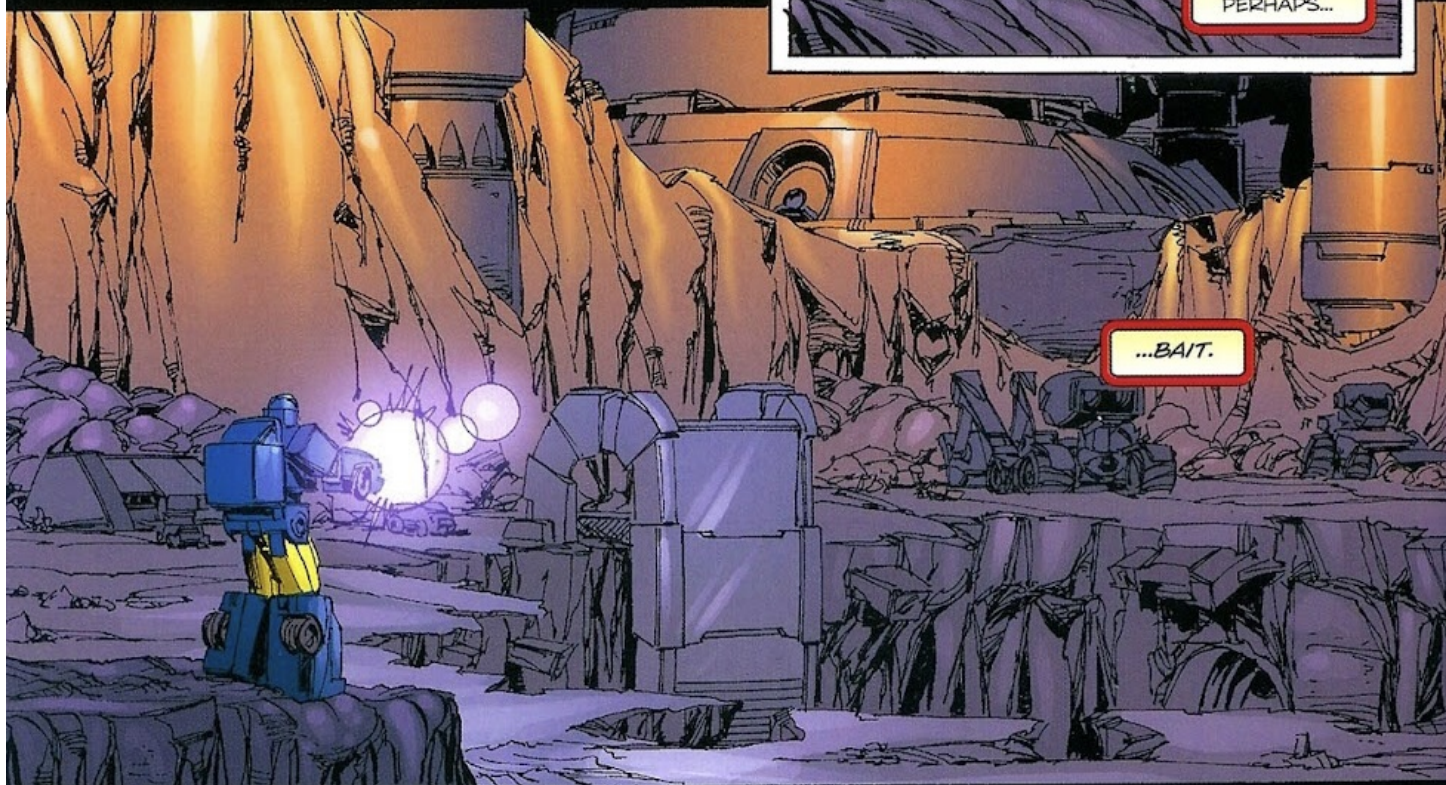


SCATTERED HERE  
AND THERE...

...*FRAGMENTARY EVIDENCE:*  
CYBERTRONIAN FLOTSAM AND  
JETSAM THAT A  
CHRONO-METALLURGICAL SCAN  
REVEALS DATES ALL THE WAY  
BACK TO THE FIRST ARK.




CLUES. OR,  
PERHAPS...




...*BAIT.*






THE SHAFT PREDATES  
THE WHOLE  
SURROUNDING AREA.  
IT'S OLD, *VERY* OLD.



AS I PROBE THE DEPTHS,  
KRAKON'S *LAST WORDS*,  
WRENCHED UP FROM SOME  
DEEP, DARK PIT OF THEIR  
OWN... *REVERBERATE*.

THERE'S... A...  
HGH-HOLE... IN  
THE WORLD...



AS A PRECAUTION, I  
ENCODE A SUMMARY OF  
MY FINDINGS TO DATE  
ONTO A CARRIER WAVE  
AND *TRANSMIT* IT TO  
MY SHIP.

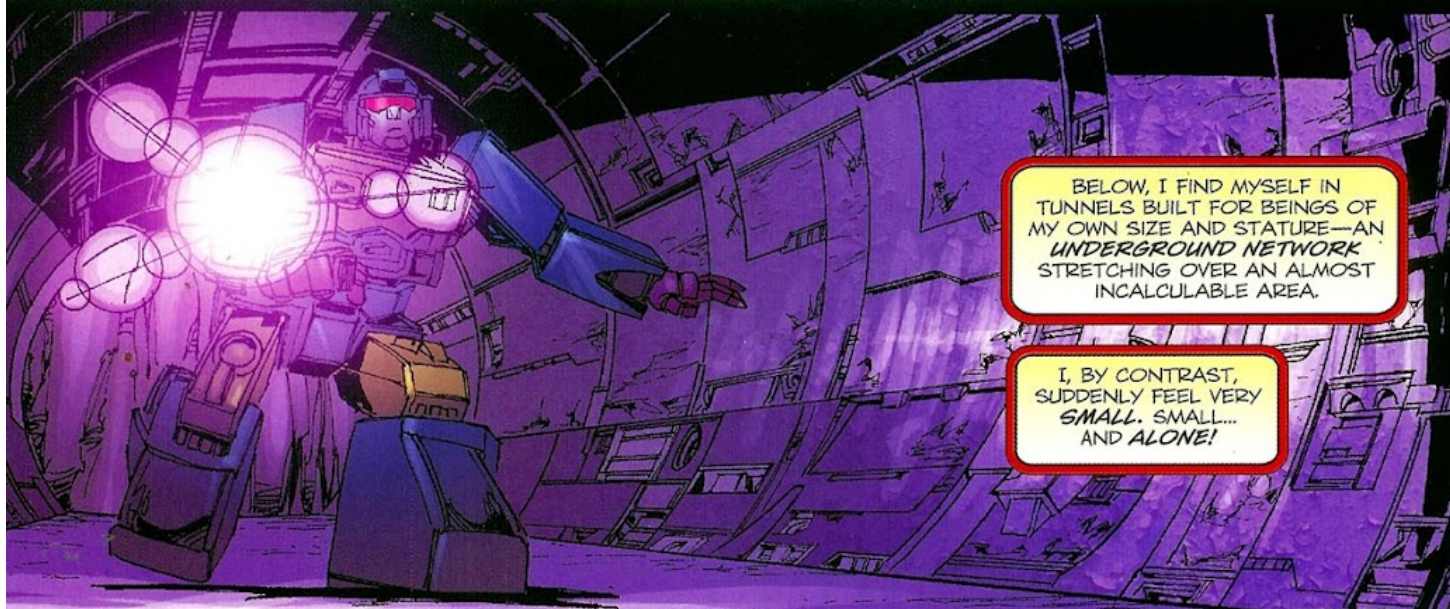
THAT DONE...



...I GO  
DOWN.



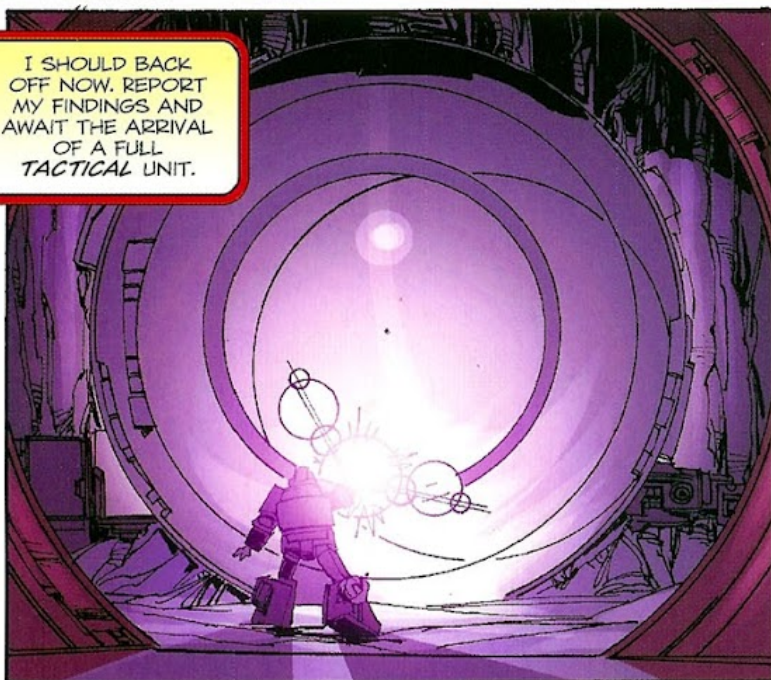




BELOW, I FIND MYSELF IN TUNNELS BUILT FOR BEINGS OF MY OWN SIZE AND STATURE—AN UNDERGROUND NETWORK STRETCHING OVER AN ALMOST INCALCULABLE AREA.

I, BY CONTRAST, SUDDENLY FEEL VERY **SMALL. SMALL... AND ALONE!**

I SHOULD BACK OFF NOW. REPORT MY FINDINGS AND AWAIT THE ARRIVAL OF A FULL **TACTICAL UNIT.**

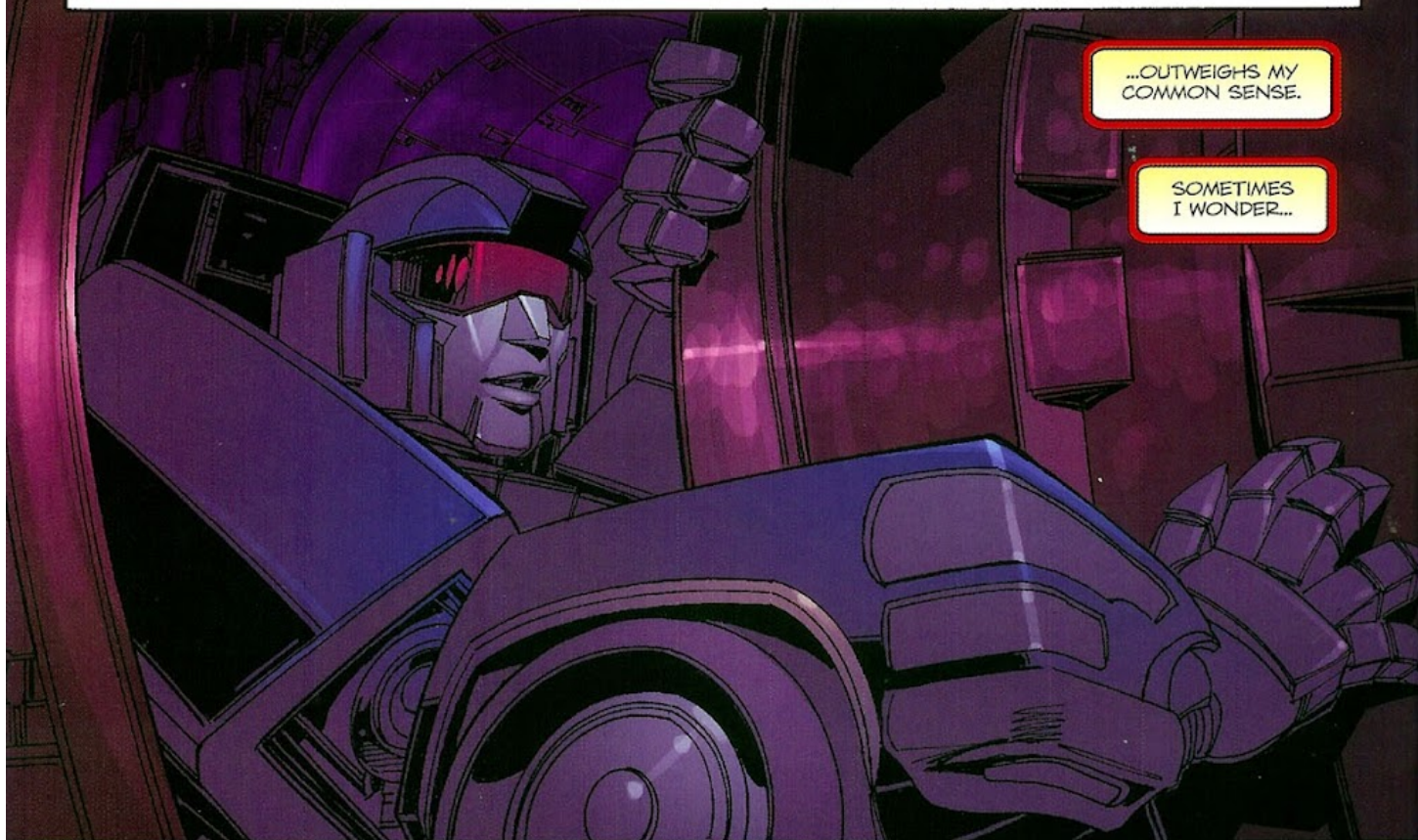


MY CURIOSITY, THOUGH...




...OUTWEIGHS MY COMMON SENSE.

SOMETIMES I WONDER...







...IF IT WILL BE THE  
DEATH OF ME.

MY FIRST RATIONAL THOUGHT  
IS... AN UNDERGROUND **SEA** OF  
IMPOSSIBLE DIMENSIONS AND  
INDETERMINATE NATURE.

BUT I QUICKLY  
**REJECT** THAT  
HYPOTHESIS.



IT'S A *PORTAL*.

SOME KIND OF  
DIMENSIONAL  
INTERFACE, BUT ON A  
*MASSIVE* SCALE.

THERE'S A *HOLE*  
IN THE WORLD.

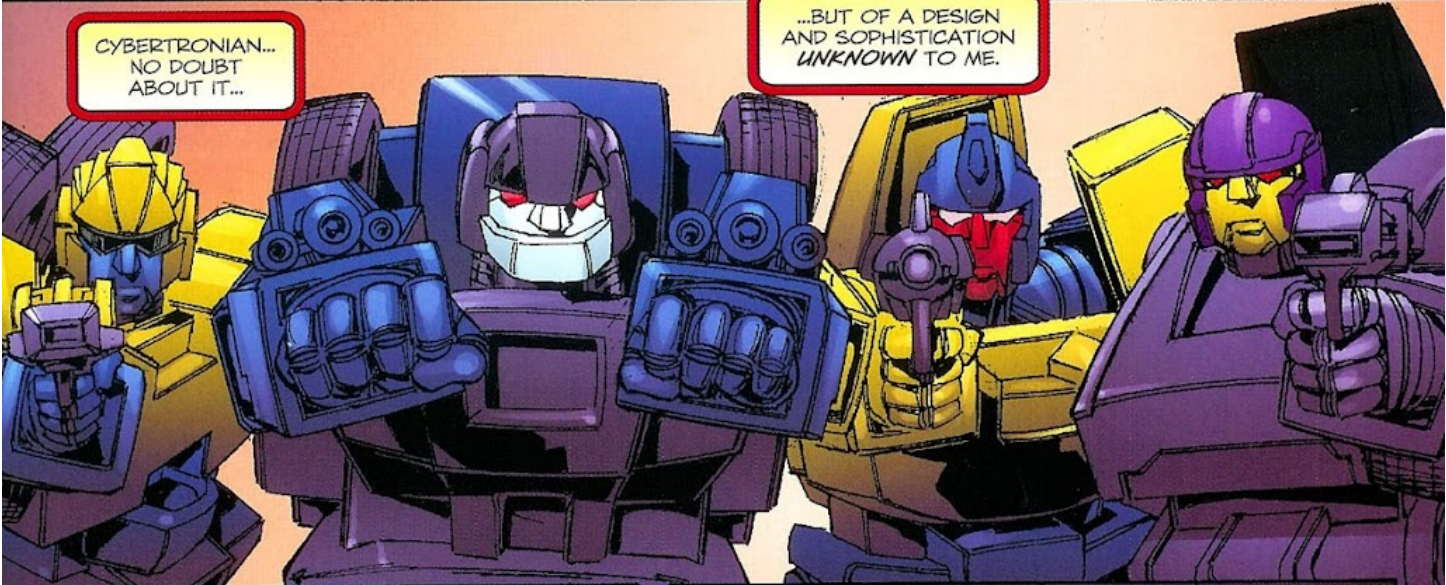
I TEST THE  
"SHALLOWS"...

...BUT RETREAT ALMOST  
IMMEDIATELY, A SENSE  
OF THINGS *LONG-DEAD*  
OVERPOWERING REASON  
AND LOGIC.

TOO LATE,  
I REALIZE  
*RETREAT*...


...IS NO LONGER  
AN OPTION.





CYBERTRONIAN...  
NO DOUBT  
ABOUT IT...

...BUT OF A DESIGN  
AND SOPHISTICATION  
UNKNOWN TO ME.



ARE YOU-?


DO YOU...  
HAVE NAMES?

THIS  
PLACE... IS  
IT... IS IT YOUR  
HOME?


NOTHING.

JUST BLANK STARES  
AND MINDLESS,  
UNIFIED INTENT.

I *SENSE*,  
RATHER THAN  
SEE...



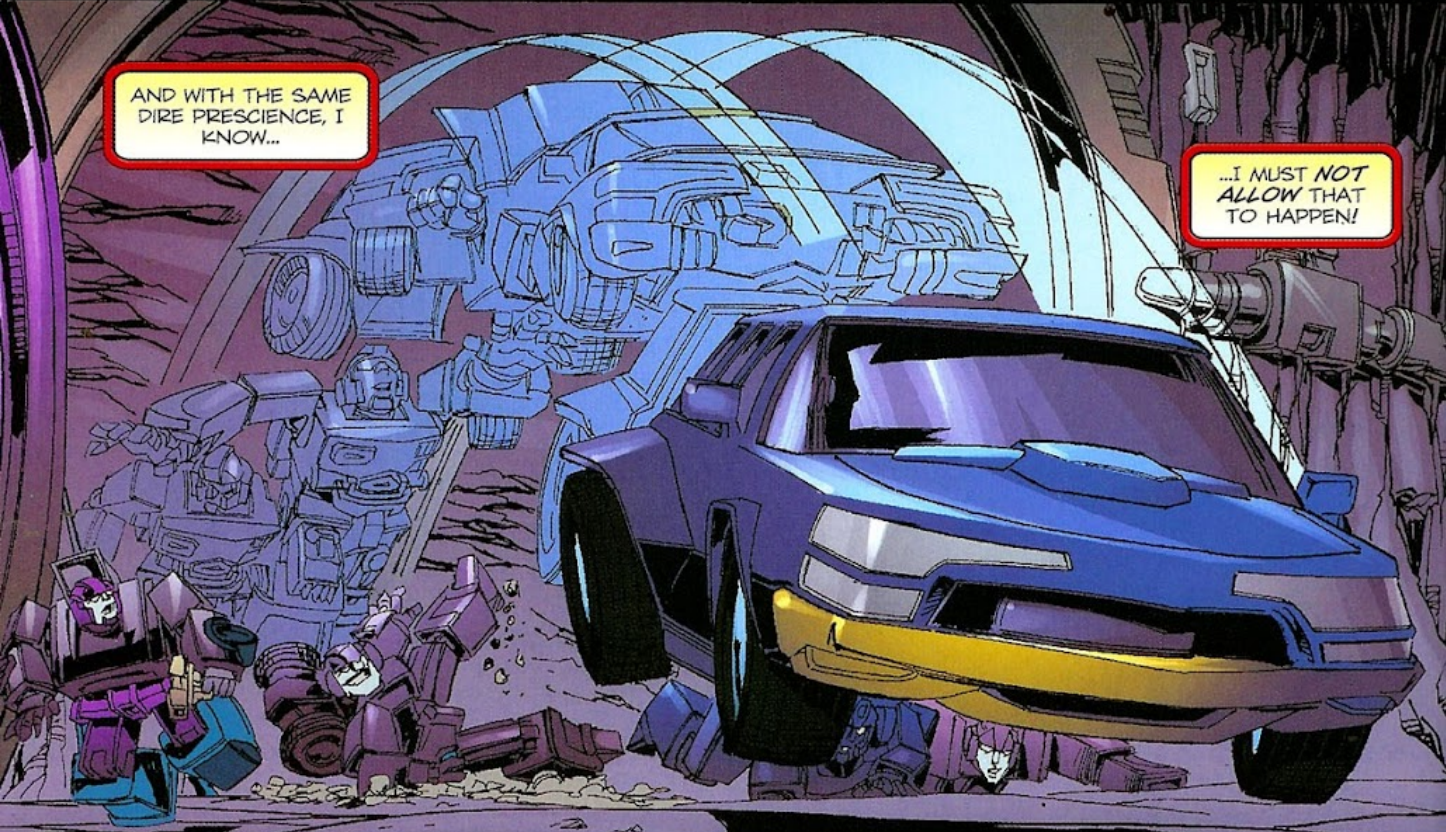
...FIGURES  
EMERGING FROM  
THE PORTAL.



WITH UTTER AND  
DREAD CERTAINTY,  
I REALIZE...

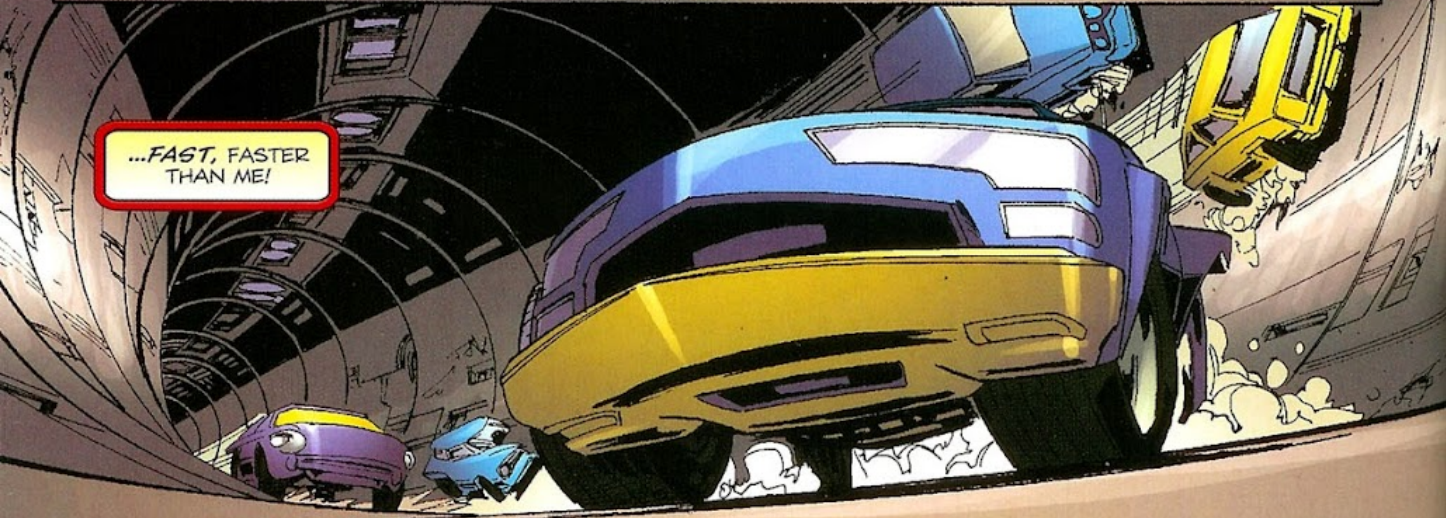
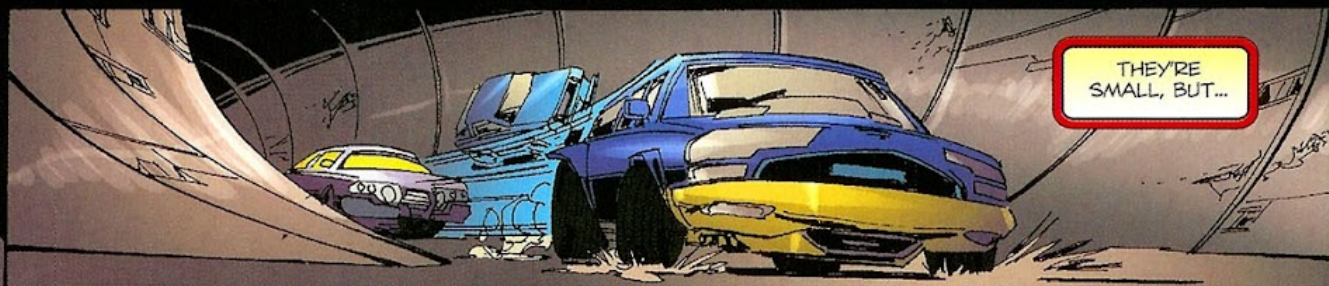
...THEY HAVE  
COME FOR ME!





AND WITH THE SAME  
DIRE PRESCIENCE, I  
KNOW...

...I MUST NOT  
ALLOW THAT  
TO HAPPEN!



...FAST, FASTER  
THAN ME!



AND...

...THEY HAVE  
TEETH!

HH-NH!

NEURAL  
DISRUPTORS. THEY  
WANT ME INTACT.

A SMALL MERCY...

...THAT COULD  
JUST WORK TO  
MY ADVANTAGE.

POOM

POOM



ADD *MANEUVERABLE* TO  
THE LIST. I BEGIN TO FEEL  
DISTINCTLY LIKE *LAST*  
STELLAR CYCLE'S MODEL.

AND WHAT  
HAPPENS NEXT...

...I DON'T  
EVEN SEE!

GA-AAH!

FTM  
FTM


FTM






I TAKE A SUDDEN  
DETOUR.

WHICH, OF  
COURSE...



...IS *EXACTLY* WHAT  
THEY WANTED!



DEAD END.



IN MORE WAYS  
THAN ONE...

HH--

-NNN!

**KRUMP**

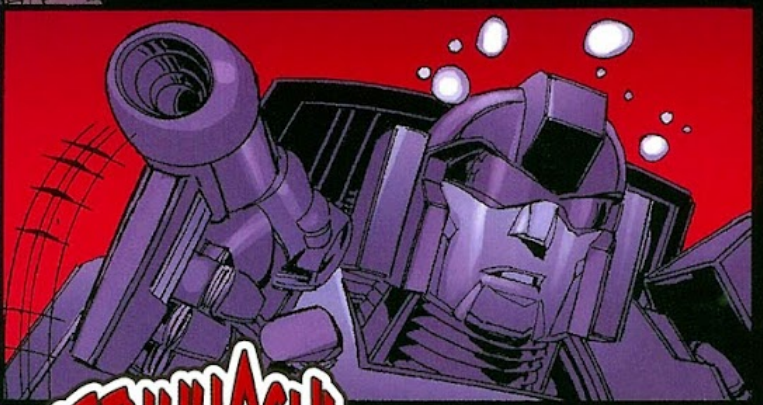


WELCOME,  
NIGHTBEAT. WE  
HAVE BEEN  
EXPECTING YOU...

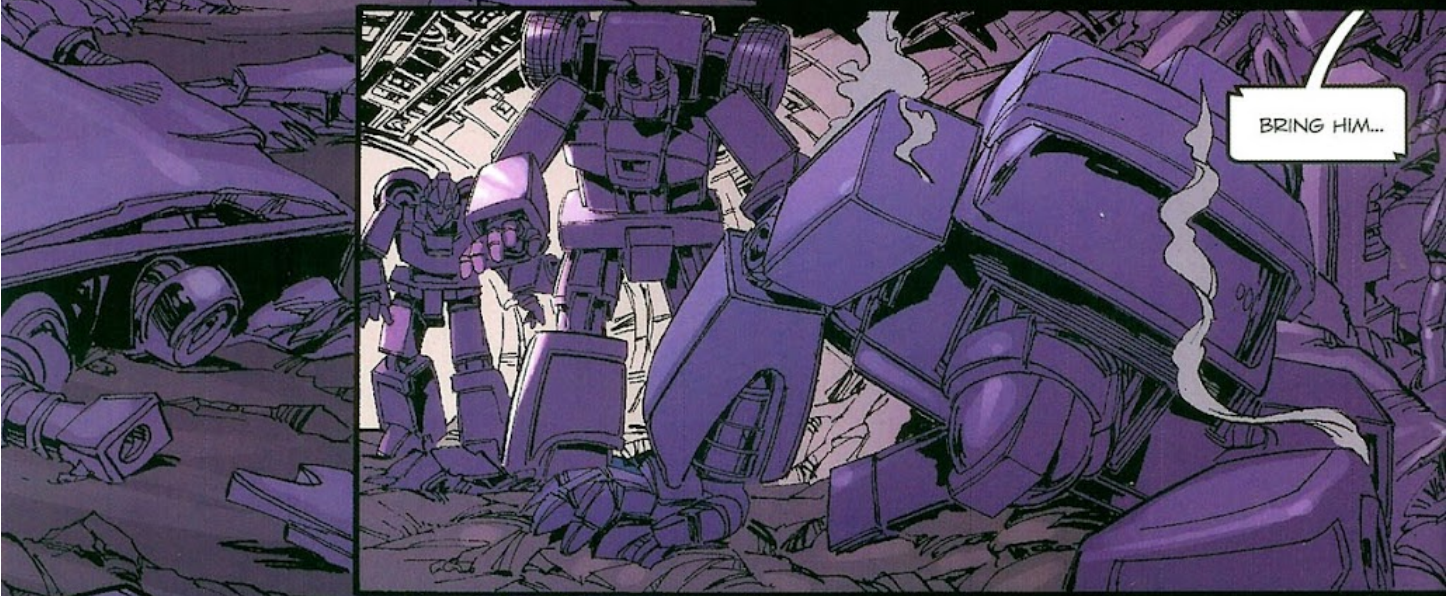
...WAITING  
FOR YOU...

THE ANSWERS  
YOU HAVE  
SOUGHT...

...ARE ALL  
HERE!

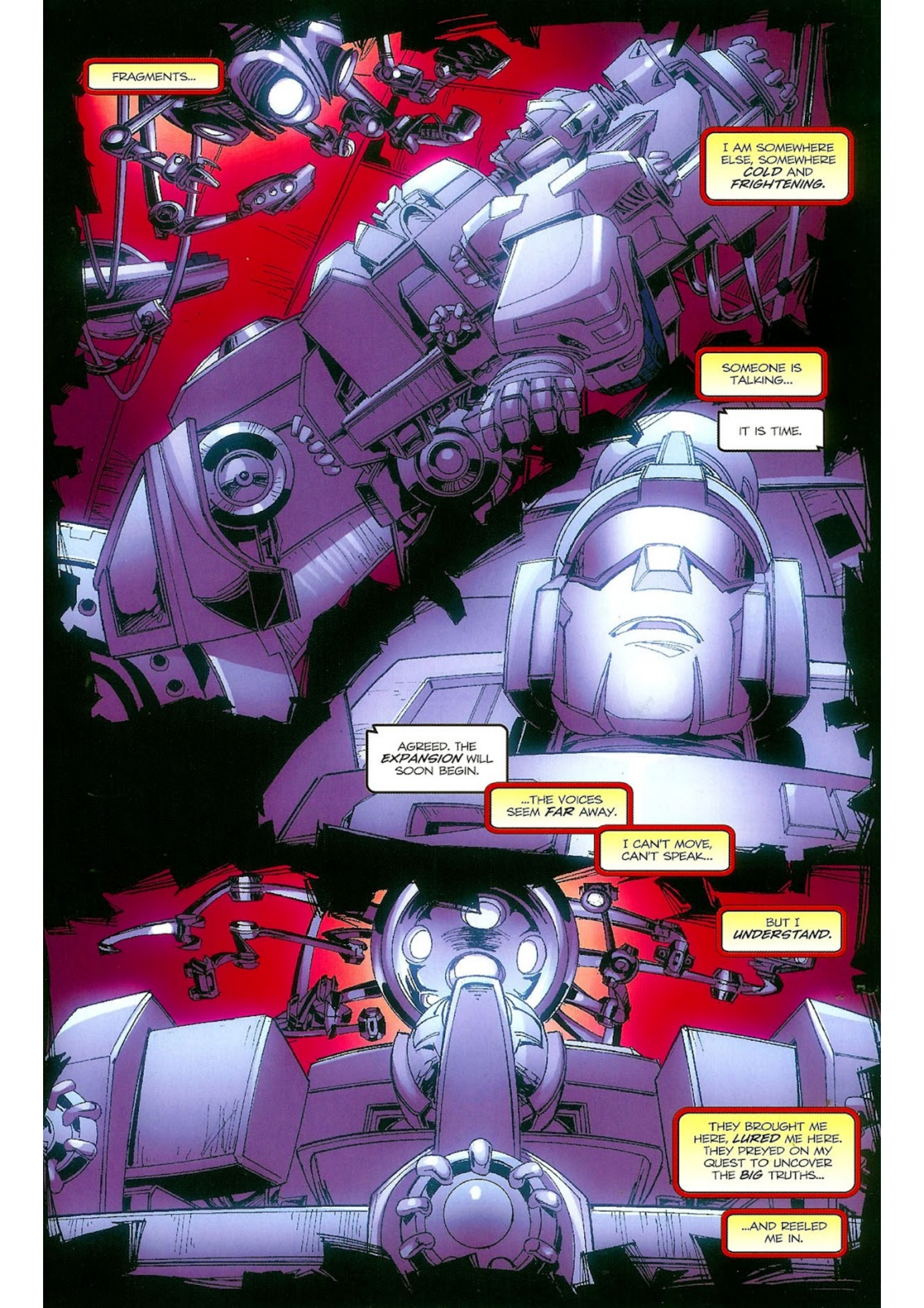


GEEUUUAGH!



BRING HIM...





FRAGMENTS...

I AM SOMEWHERE  
ELSE, SOMEWHERE  
*COLD* AND  
*FRIGHTENING*.

SOMEONE IS  
TALKING...

IT IS TIME.

AGREED. THE  
*EXPANSION* WILL  
SOON BEGIN.

...THE VOICES  
SEEM *FAR* AWAY.

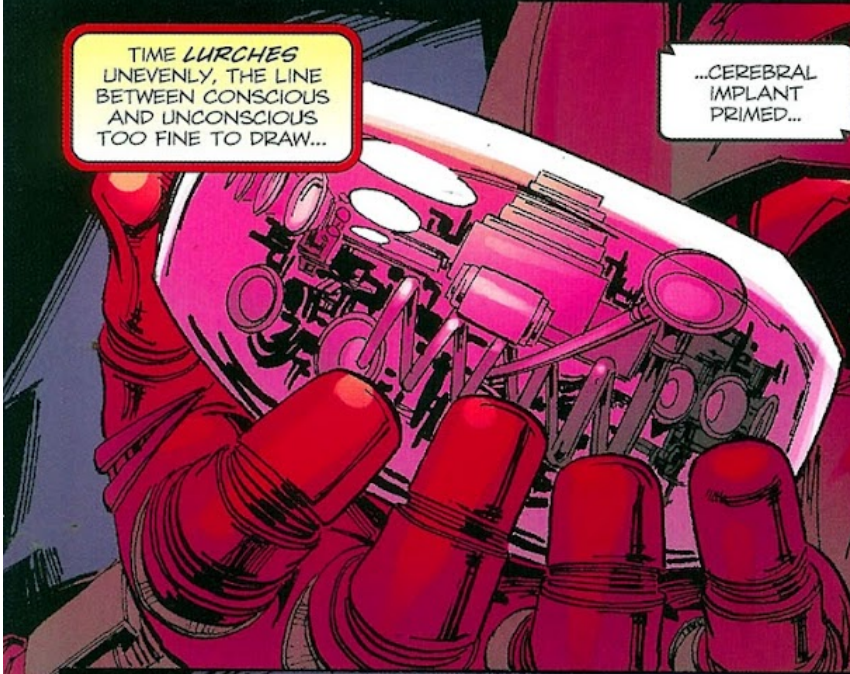
I CAN'T MOVE,  
CAN'T SPEAK...

BUT I  
*UNDERSTAND*.

THEY BROUGHT ME  
HERE, *LURED* ME HERE.  
THEY PREYED ON MY  
QUEST TO UNCOVER  
THE *BIG* TRUTHS...

...AND REELED  
ME IN.






TIME LURCHES  
UNEVENLY, THE LINE  
BETWEEN CONSCIOUS  
AND UNCONSCIOUS  
TOO FINE TO DRAW...

...CEREBRAL  
IMPLANT  
PRIMED...


...BUFFER  
BLOCKS READY...




ON BALANCE...

...I PREFER  
UNCONSCIOUS.

THINGS ARE DONE TO MY  
CRANIAL ARCHITECTURE.  
UNSPEAKABLE THINGS.



I CATCH RANDOM WORDS  
AND PHRASES—"DEAD  
UNIVERSE," "EMISSARY"—  
UNTIL FINALLY...



WHEN WE ARE  
READY, WE WILL CALL.  
AND YOU... YOU WILL  
KNOW WHAT TO DO!

AND THEN  
NOTHING.



A ROUTINE SWEEP OF  
THE **DURZAN SECTOR**  
YIELDS LITTLE OF  
INTEREST TO ME.

WHILE I ENJOY MY  
FREE-RANGING, MOSTLY  
SELF-STRUCTURED REMIT, IT  
**DOES** GET A LITTLE  
LONELY AT TIMES.

WHAT I NEED... IS A GOOD  
**MYSTERY** TO OCCUPY MY  
MIND, BUT IT SEEMS  
MYSTERIES ARE IN SHORT  
SUPPLY RIGHT NOW.



I CONSIDER DUSTING  
OFF SOMETHING OLD  
AND UNSOLVED.  
MAYBE EVEN ONE OF  
THE **BIG THREE**...



...BUT INSTEAD, A  
CASE FINDS ME.

NIGHTBEAT, THIS  
IS **OPTIMUS  
PRIME**...

GO AHEAD,  
PRIME.



I WANT YOU  
TO RENDEZVOUS  
WITH **ARK-32** FOR  
ONWARDS TRANSIT  
TO EARTH. I...

...HAVE  
NEED OF  
YOUR SPECIAL  
TALENTS.







UNDERSTOOD.  
ON MY WAY—



UNH!

NIGHTBEAT?  
ARE YOU  
ALRIGHT?



I... I'M FINE.  
IT'S *NOTHING*.  
JUST A MINOR  
CEREBRAL SURGE.

I'LL BE  
WITH YOU  
SHORTLY.

NIGHTBEAT  
OUT.



NOTHING? I WONDER, AS  
THE PAIN SUBSIDES, I'M  
LEFT WITH A NAGGING,  
DISQUIETING FEELING...



...I'M *MISSING*  
SOMETHING.

CARRIER  
WAVE  
RECEIVED AT  
GAMMA-ZERO-  
FOUR. ACTION?

**The end?**



# The Transformers: Spotlight #2 Nightbeat Cover Checklist



Cover A  
MD Bright  
Colors by  
Josh Burcham



Cover RI A  
James Raiz  
Variant Cover  
Colors by  
Josh Burcham



Cover RI B  
Nick Roche  
Variant Cover  
Colors by  
Josh Burcham



2006 BotCon Exclusive  
Sketch Cover  
Front Cover Art by MD Bright  
Back Cover Art by Nick Roche